



(For immediate release)

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REDUCE WASTE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

JEFFERSON CITY, MO, DECEMBER 1, 2003 – The holidays have traditionally been a season for giving, but along with the gifts come a lot of waste. Careful consideration during the purchase of gifts will reduce the amount of useless packaging material and unusable products that may end up in the wastebasket before the holidays are over.

Here are some ways you can reduce waste.

- Buy gifts and products that are made of recycled materials. For example: clothing or items made of recycled plastic bottles; or crafts and products made from scrap wood or reclaimed lumber.
- Buy toys that don't use batteries or buy rechargeable batteries to go with new electronic toys. Information on disposing of batteries is available on www.rbr.org. Collection sites are often available at Wal-Mart, Radio Shack, Target, Sears, Black and Decker, Best Buy, Circuit City and Home Depot. Call before you make the trip.
- Consider buying fewer, but higher quality, durable goods to reduce waste. Low price doesn't always mean a good bargain. A higher priced item may last much longer and reduce the amount of waste ending up in landfills.
- Buy living gifts. House plants, garden seeds or potted trees that can be transplanted in the spring. When these plants do ultimately die, they can be composted and returned to the soil. For a list of Missouri growers and nurseries, check <http://www.midwestplants.com/ByState/Missouri/missouri.html>.

- Give gifts grown, raised, packaged and marketed by your neighbors. The Missouri Department of Agriculture has made available a free listing of Missouri products and where to find them. Check <http://www.mda.state.mo.us/Market/c21.htm> for details.
- Give gifts that promote lifestyle changes friendly to the environment. For example, cloth napkins and tablecloths, cloth shopping bags, a recycled plastic compost bin, gift certificates to resale shops or an equipment rental store, lamps designed for compact fluorescent bulbs, lunch boxes, recycling bins or stationary made from recycled paper.
- Reduce waste by offering homemade food items or personal services as gifts, such as washing the family car, sweeping sidewalks, shoveling snow or painting for elderly family members or neighbors. Bake cookies or other homemade favorites for someone special.
- Reuse holiday wrapping. Use old maps or pages from the newspaper for wrapping gifts. Put gifts in decorative tins or boxes instead of throwaway wrapping materials. Use and reuse decorative gift bags.
- Donate nearly new items as gifts or donations to community service organizations.
- Use your imagination in trimming the tree or yard for the holidays. Take time to recondition strings of lights that may only need a few bulbs. Create ornaments out of items that can be painted or decorated for a new look.
- Reuse the Christmas tree. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has a fact sheet available on proper disposal of Christmas trees on the department's Web site at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/oac/pub184.pdf>. To compensate for the harvest of your

Christmas tree, arrange to plant a new tree next spring. Or, consider using a durable artificial tree. Try reusing old artificial trees in outdoor holiday displays or for feeding birds and wildlife.

- Take your surplus packing foam peanuts and bubble wrap to a mailing or shipping store where they can be reused. Recycle cardboard boxes or better yet, save boxes and bows for reuse next year.
- To preserve the spirit of giving, don't try to give too much. Try giving homemade items of quality. Less stuff means less waste and a healthier environment for everyone.

For further information on waste reduction, reuse or recycling, contact the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Management Program at (573) 751-5401, 1-800-361-4827 or visit our Web site at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/alpd/swmp/homeswmp.htm>.

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